Lillie Pozer
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[For the 'Messenger.'

The Quest.

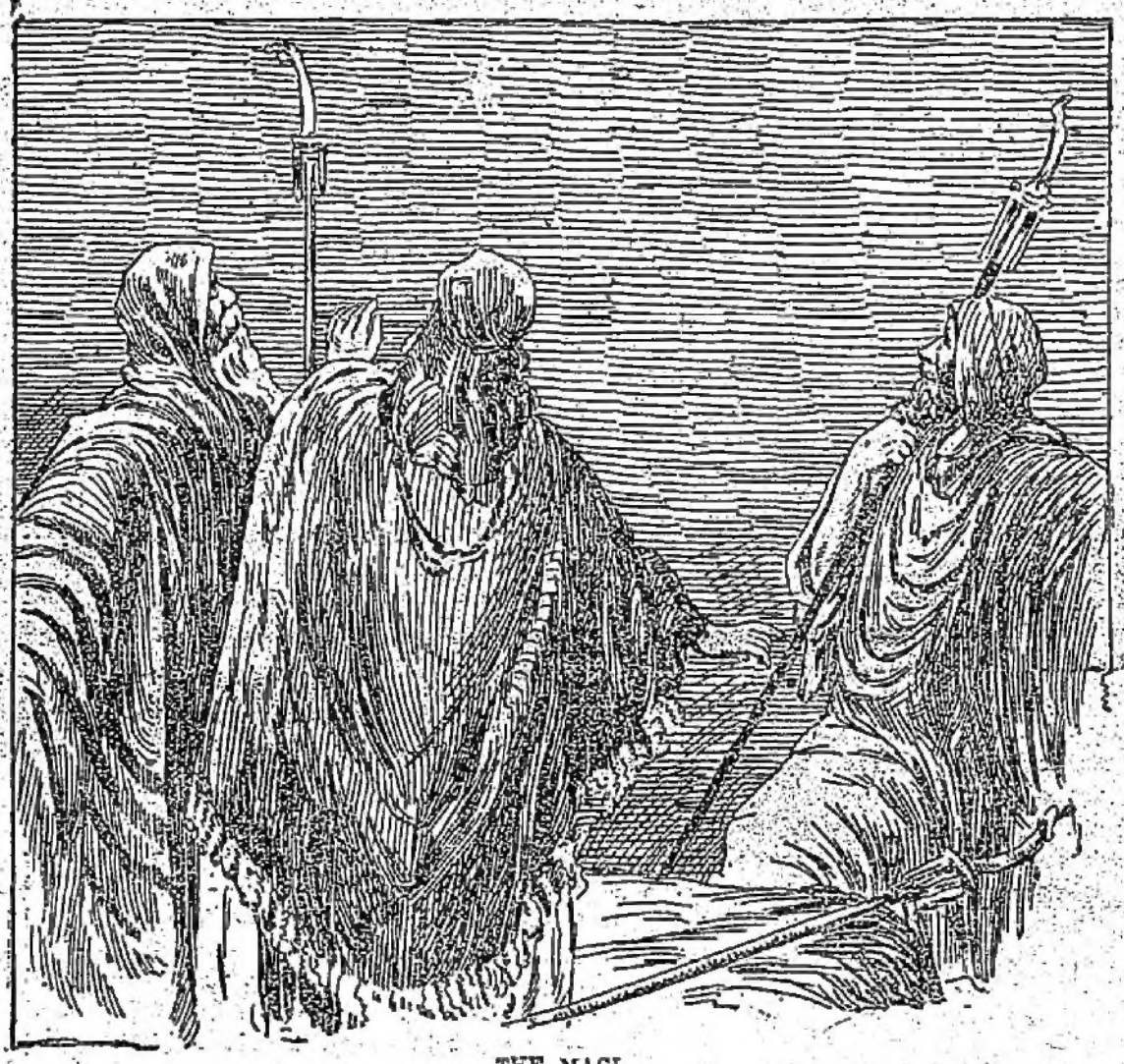
Where is the Christ-child, where?
We have come to the happy day,
After long weeks they say
We should see the Prince so fair.
Where is the Christ-child, where?

Say, is the Christ-child here?
We have sought to the holy book,
On its words the readers look,
And tell us the Prince is near.
Say, is the Christ-child here?

Let us the Christ-child greet.
We have brought Him what gifts we could,
Wealth and our homage good,
Patience that made pain sweet.
Let us the Christ-child greet.

See, how the Christ-child smiles
We have come from afar for this,
And still shall for our bliss,
After long days and miles
See how the Christ-child smile!

ANSTANCE REDE.



THE MAGI.

Inside and Outside.

BY ROSE HARTWICK THORPE.

'Are we almost there, mamma? and will grandpa be glad to see us?' asked a little child as he crept closer to his mother's side to shield himself from the bitter night winds, as the early twilight shadows settled down upon the snow-clad earth one cold December day.

'It is only a little farther,' answered the woman, catching her breath in a quick, pained way, as she glanced down the long, familiar street, and thought of the time when her joyous feet had tripped lightly over its pavement, and her happy heart had been a stranger to want and sorrow.

Her face, as the light from the street lamp fell upon it, seemed gentle and refined; her voice was low and sweet. In spite of cold and hunger, of tattered garments and utter destitution, she appeared a lady still.

'This is grandpa's home,' she said at length, as they came to a handsome residence, which was all aglow with light, and voices of merriment came floating out with a pleasant sound.

They paused beside a window through which they caught glimpses of a Christmas tree loaded with tops and bon-bons which a group of happy children were admiring.

For the first time the child seemed to realize the difference between those children's life and his, and a shadow fell upon his eager face, as he exclaimed with a sob:

'Oh, mamma, we can't ever go in there, you an' I. We ain't fit,' and he glanced at his tattered garments in dismay. 'They're all so beautiful, an' so nice, they'd never let us in, 'cause they'd be so 'shamed of us. But oh, mamma, it's just like heaven in there, and—and it's so awfully cold out here.'

Her only answer was a weary sigh, as her eyes wandered about the luxuriously furnished apartment in search of a familiar face. Yes, there sat her brother Philip, older, and more consequential in his bearing, but the same brother Philip whose hand had been the means of ruining all her hopes of earthly happiness.

Her wedding eve. How well she remembered it. 'Twas then that Philip offered the 'cup of death' to her new-made husband. How firmly, almost indignantly, he had refused at first; but Philip's sneers and words of sarcasm had caused him to yield. To-night Philip, with his wife and children, sit in the warmth and shelter of the old home, while she and her little child are homeless wanderers out in the street. The widow and the orphan of one who has gone to a drunkard's grave.

'Ah, me,' she sighed, while the tears rolled silently over her cold cheeks, and dropped on the bundle she carried—the bundle which contained all of her worldly possessions. Ah, me! William might have been a noble man to-day, living and happy; blest in all that makes life truly desirable; but for Philip's sneers at his "lack of manhood," as he termed it, on our wedding eve.'

Philip Winters, who had been the means of William Ellis's ruin, by urging him to drink on his wedding eve, and thus arousing a craving appetite for more; an appetite which could never after be appeased or satisfied, was the first to advise his sister to leave him to his fate. But she, knowing his warm, true heart, knowing his temptations, and the power of the chains which bound him, refused to leave him, and those who had once been nearest and dearest to her, disowned her. Had her mother lived she would have been sure of a loving welcome home at any time she chose to return, and she felt certain that her father's mind had been prejudiced against her, for in the olden days she had been his pet and idol.

Within was warmth and food; were happy children who knew, and claimed their right to all the comforts and luxuries that home afforded. Without stood the homeless outcasts, hungry and cold, uncertain and hesitating, viewing that scene with longing eyes, but not daring to enter.

By the glowing grate, in his easy chair, sat an aged man, with his head bowed thoughtfully on his chest, and a troubled expression on his face.

'What makes you so sad on Christmas eve, grandpa?' asked a youthful voice at his elbow. 'I thought that everybody was happy on Christmas eve.'

'I'm thinking of your Aunt Elsie, Charlie,' he answered, 'and I wish that she was with us to-night.'

'And so she might have been,' spoke Philip Winters from his easy chair across the hearth. 'She would have been with us to-night if she had listened to my advice; but she preferred that drunken husband of hers to all that we could offer.'

'Ah, Philip,' answered the old man sadly, 'I fear that our judgment of her motives and actions has not been a righteous one. Don't you remember what a strictly temperance man William Ellis was before he married Elsie? He would never touch or taste of any intoxicating drink. We all thought him unpleasantly radical in his ideas.'

'And so he was,' answered Philip, 'and when he took to drink he went to extremes the other way. One would have thought that a wife would have had some influence over him, and he would have tried to be respectable for her sake! Bah! I've no patience with such men.'

'I've heard,' said Mr. Winters, 'that his ancestors were nearly all drunkards. If it was so, that accounts for his fear of having anything to do with it. Knowing his family history as he probably did, it is a wonder that he yielded to temptation. There

must have been some fearful influence brought to bear upon him, to make him do so. I believe that whoever put the cup to his lips, and tempted him to fall, will have a fearful account to answer for before the Judge of the universe.'

The old man spoke feelingly, and with great earnestness. Philip Winters moved uneasily in his chair, and cast a searching glance into his father's face to see if he suspected him of being the one he denounced so severely, but there was nothing in the calm, thoughtful face opposite to indicate that he had any knowledge of Philip's instrumentality in William Ellis's downfall.

'He wasn't obliged to make a brute of himself if he didn't choose to do so,' said Philip, impatiently. 'I don't believe in excusing one man on another's shoulders.'

'Nor I,' answered his father in an impressive manner. 'The two sins are separate, and each will have his own account to settle at the last. God's judgment is wiser and broader than ours; He looks deeper into human hearts; He understands the true cause of every one's sinning, and His judgment will be just.'

Philip Winters bit his lips and—was it the glow of the firelight that sent such a ruddy flush over his face, or was conscience accusing him of a noble life's ruin?

'Grandpa,' said the boy, who had been an attentive listener to this conversation, 'I shall never touch a drop of wine again as long as I live, and I'll never, never ask any one else to drink either.'

'I hope that you will remember your promise, Charlie,' said his grandfather, laying his hand caressingly on the boy's sunny hair. 'Such little boys as you ought not to know the taste of wine.'

'We have it on our table at dinner, and papa drinks, you know, grandpa, and sometimes he gives me a little with sugar and water,' said Charlie, with an anxious glance at his father. 'I like the taste of it, but I'll never touch it again.'

'Ah, Philip,' said Mr. Winters, gravely, 'you are sowing tares and the harvest is sure to come.'

'Grandpa, grandpa, there's a poor little beggar boy and his mamma looking in at our window, and they's so cold! may we call them in and warm them?' asked a bright-faced little girl, slipping her hand coaxingly into his aged one, and as she lifted her sweet, pleading face to his, she whispered:

'For Jesus' sake, you know, grandpa, dear, 'cause it's His birthday to-morrow.'

'Yes, darling, bring them in,' he answered, and away flew the happy child on her mission of mercy.

The next instant the great door flew open, and a little fairy in silken robes and dainty slippers appeared, framed in its massive oaken casing. The wind tossed her golden curls back from her animated face, and her blue eyes shone like twin stars.

'Come in, come right in,' she called out. 'Grandpa said I could 'vite you in. There's lots of room in here, and it's so cold out there.'

When the old man, with slower footstep, had followed the little one into the hall, he met her bringing forward a poorly-clad woman and a little boy who clung to her in shy timidity. When the light from the chandelier fell on her thin, tired face he knew his daughter, and opening his arms he gave her a joyous welcome.

Perhaps the words of censure which Mr. Winters spoke, without knowing the rebuke was merited by his son, softened the haughty pride of Philip Winters's heart; perhaps his conscience upbraided him for putting the fatal cup to the lips of another; it may be that he realized his instrumentality in bringing ruin upon his sister's home; at any rate he gave that sister and her child a cordial welcome, and strove by every means in his power to make their future as happy as their past had been miserable. Although he never confessed that he had erred in his past judgment of what was right and proper, his little son had no opportunity of draining his wine glass in the future, for wine never made its appearance on his table from that day forth.—'Temperance Truths.'

Christmas.

The inn was full at Bethlehem;
A busy crowd was there;
And some were rich, and some were wise,
And some were young and fair;
But who or what they were, to-day
There is not one to care;
But in the cattle's manger
There lay a baby stranger,
Soft nestled like a snow-white dove, among the scented hay;
And, lo, through Him was given
Our song to earth and heaven,
The song two worlds together sing upon a Christmas day:
'Glory to God! Good will to men!'
O listen! Wake it once again!
'Peace upon earth! Good will to men!'

They sing it, those who sang it first,
The angels strong and high;
They sing, in shining white, the saints,
Who died long years gone by;
And all the fluttering cherub throng,
The children of the sky;
They sing, the patient, waiting souls
Who still faith's conflicts know;
They sing, life's happy innocents,
Their faces all aglow;
One melody fills heaven above,
And floats from earth below,
The song of that sweet stranger,
Who in the cattle's manger
Lay, nineteen hundred years ago, among the scented hay!
All sin and wrong forgiven,
Earth seems close kin of heaven,
And sweet two worlds together sing upon a Christmas day!

—Marian Douglas, in 'Harper's Bazar.'

'In My Name.'

(By Lucy Randolph Fleming, in 'Children's Work for Children.')

The little bright-faced congregation gathered in the sitting-room, where the cheery fire and lamplight seem flashing out a welcome, is not at all altered from the group which sat on the hearth-rug just twelve months ago.

'This will be our last talk for this year,' said Edith; 'and I wonder what text mother will give us to-night.'

'I am so sorry this must be the last,' said Alice. 'I never knew or stopped to think how much children can find in the bible to help in mission work.'

'Nor I,' said Ned. 'I always thought mission work must chiefly be trying to get money to help.'

'Well, our band has raised more this year than it did last,' said Hal, exultantly.

'Don't you think it's holier money than it was once?' ventured Lulu timidly. 'I never put anything in my mite-chest now without thinking about the blessing on even little gifts.'

'The thought of "helping together" always stirs me,' said Frank. 'Somehow that seems to bring me right close up to the missionaries in a way I never thought about before.'

'I used to put in my pennies, and sing at the band meetings,' chimed in Bessie, 'and I thought it all ended there till next time. Now I think ever so much oftener of those heathen children since we had those texts about "our Father" and "the little ones." Why, they almost seem kin to me!'

The older children could not help laughing a little at Bessie's earnestness. But this talk among themselves showed that the true missionary spirit was surely implanted and growing in their hearts, and thoughtful, expectant faces greeted Mrs. Palmer's entrance.

'For eleven months,' said Mrs. Palmer, 'we have been trying to find out some of the sweet and wonderful ways in which God is pleased to help our mission work when we come to Him as our Father, knocking in humble faith at the door of His great storehouse of grace. We have seen how ready He is to answer; how tenderly the Saviour listens; how graciously the Holy Spirit helps us when we do not even know how to ask for what we need. We have found many sweet, encouraging promises which tell us how surely we may help ourselves and others by prayer.

'And now in this last talk we have the grandest promise of all: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." It is among the last promises, the last sweet, tender words, Jesus spoke to His disciples before He died on the cross.'

'It is in John's Gospel, thirteenth chapter, fourteenth verse,' said Alice.

'And, mother,' said Edith, 'the verse before is very much like it: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."'

'Is there not a grand promise in these texts? Anything in Jesus' name, and it will be given us!

'As we go about our mission work we must remember the words of the hymn, "Take the name of Jesus with you." We must give the gospel of Christ to the heathen, because "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." We must give the gospel that His name may be glorified and His kingdom come, and because He has commanded that we do this in His name. And then for grace and strength to do this work, for blessings on it, for the gift of the Holy Spirit for ourselves, the missionaries, the heathen—for all things, for anything, we need to do His will—we must humbly ask God to give us for Jesus' sake.'

When Christmas Comes.

When Christmas comes,
The baby girl who scarce can speak,
The youth with bronzed and bearded cheek,
The aged, bent with weight of years,
The sorrow-stricken spent with tears,
The poor, the rich, the grave, the gay,
Who fare along life's rugged way,
Are glad of heart, when in the sky
The wondrous seraph wings sweep by,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
The sailor on the seas afloat,
The traveller in lands remote,
The warrior by the campfire's light,
The courtier in the palace bright,
The student by the midnight lamp,
The miner deep in dust and damp,
Alike uplift, through riven skies,
The wondrous look of glad surprise,
When Christmas comes.

When Christmas comes,
In field and street, in mart and farm,
The world takes on a lovelier charm;
Sweet-scented boughs of pine and fir
Are brought, like frankincense and myrrh,
To make our hallowed places meet
For hands that clasp and tones that greet,
While hearts, worth more than gold or gem,
Go forth to find their Bethlehem,
When Christmas comes,

Margaret E. Sangster.

Boys and Girls.

Christmas Cheer.

(By Margaret E. Sangster.)

Again the Christmas music
In the waning of the year,
And far and wide are throbbing
The waves of Christmas cheer.
The song the angels brought us
Still thrills along our way,
And 'Glory in the Highest' wakes
Anew on Christmas day.

The Word who came from heaven,
Incarnate here to dwell,
Has never left His people,
He reigns, Immanuel.
Though deep may brood the shadows,
There shines a genial ray
Across our pilgrim journeyings,
The light from Christmas day.

Yet, in the solemn midnight,
Discerned by listening ears,
The silvern sweetest harp notes
Come floating down the years;
Yet, in the splendid sky vault
The watching eye may see
The Star that led to Bethlehem,
And foretold Calvary.

For, as the mother brooded
Her darling's little face,
The shadow of the coming cross
Fell o'er the hallowed place
Where He, the High and Holy,
Took on our robe of clay,
And bent Him to the lowly
In the dawn of Christmas day.

Then, heaven and earth together
Began the great new song,
By thousand times ten thousand,
A mighty choral throng,
Uplifted, chanted, carried
On its triumphant way
The song of men and angels,
The song of Christmas day.

The Gloria in Excelsis,
The peace, the dear good will,
The blessed cheer of Christmas,
The cheer that lingers still,
Forever and forever,
That floods our mortal way,
And makes the whole world blither,
The cheer of Christmas day.
—'Christian Intelligencer.'

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.

[For the 'Messenger.'

The Dawn of Peace.

(By Corinthia Wyte.)

It was Christmas eve. All day it had been drizzling fine, misty rain on the ice-crusted snow which lay six inches deep in the city, and the prophecies of 'a fine, snowy Christmas' which had been so plentiful yesterday were being turned into lamentations over the change of weather.

A merry party, assembled in the comfortable sitting-room of one of the big, old-fashioned houses on Union avenue, were discussing the probabilities of the weather with great animation.

'If it keeps on like this we'll not have much sleighing to-morrow.'

'What shall we do if we can't go sleighing?'

'Claire, you will have to invent some new game for us if our usual Christmas sleigh-ride has to be put off.'

'Why should we not have a dance? Do you ever get tired of dancing? I could dance all night, and all day, too, for that matter.'

'Well, please don't turn this into a dance. It is supposed to be a card party.'

A loud laugh greeted this remark, and the party quickly disposed themselves at the tables set around the room for the game. The tall old clock on the mantel shelf ticked solemnly on. It had looked down on many such scenes as this. It was quite accustomed to these light-hearted young people with their ceaseless chatter and fun, and seemingly absolute freedom from care of any kind. It was accustomed to the beauty and brightness, and ticked solemnly on. These young people might have no cares and duties, but it was its duty to warn them all with each swing of the pendulum that time was earnest, passing by; that each hour and minute brought nearer the day when time should be no more. But young people as a rule pay but little attention to those warnings, which can be easily drowned by the sound of their own gay voices.

The clock began to strike nine. A girl at one of the tables threw down her cards and went over to the window.

'Why, Claire, what on earth is the matter with you?' asked two or three voices.

'She's looking for some one,' slyly suggested one.

'Will that clock never stop? It seems to me it's always striking nine,' said Claire impatiently.

'Curious kind of a clock,' said a mocking voice.

'Hush! don't tease her.'

The young lady of the house crossed the room and stood by the girl at the window, and putting her arm round her, said:

'Come, Claire, what is the matter, dear? Do cheer up; it isn't like you to be glum. You know you are the life of us all; we can't play without you; come on.'

Claire shook her head; her face wore a troubled, perplexed look.

'No, Nellie,' she said gently, 'I am sorry to seem rude and to break up the party, but I am going home. I can't explain it to you, but I have to think.'

'Going home?' came in dismayed chorus from the rest of the party, who were now standing in various attitudes around the room, having given up the thought of finishing the game without Claire, who was the leader in all their sports.

'May I have the pleasure of seeing you home, Miss Claire?' asked one of the young men, stepping forward.

'No, thank you, I'd rather be alone,' returned Claire. And making her excuses to her hostess, she put on her wraps to go across the street to her own house.

When she got out in the wind she breathed a long, deep sigh. She had expected the cold air to clear her head and take from her the oppressive sense of having to think out and unravel some difficult and perhaps insoluble problem.

'What was the matter?' she asked herself

impatiently; why should she be troubled with thoughts of this kind? She, Claire Raymond, who had always been the gayest of the gay, and had been the leader of her set ever since she had first gone to school. What if it was Christmas eve? What did 'Christmas' mean to her? What—why?

She opened the house door with her latch key and went quietly up to her own room. Throwing herself into a rocker, she tried to forget her thoughts, but they kept coming back to her mind. 'What did Christmas mean? Was there a Christ-child born into the world long ago, who, though He was God, lived as a Man of Sorrows; who, when He left the earth, sent back His Spirit to be a Comforter to men? Could the story be true? She had heard it often, and she knew that many people believed it, but her grandmother said it was all a fable, and grandmother was very good and kind, and had taken care of her ever since she was a baby. She could not remember the young mother and father who had both died before she was a year old. . . . No, her grandmother did not believe in Christ, and certainly Claire had never troubled her head much about religion.

She had heard Christians spoken of as 'long-faced, solemn hypocrites,' and was glad that she had not occasion to become one. . . . That was before May Cromer came into her life. May was a sweet-faced, merry-hearted girl, whose bright, cheerful ways won the hearts of all in school. Claire had watched May Cromer's daily life. Day in and day out, in all the petty trials of school life. She knew May called herself a Christian, and though she had been brought up to scoff at Christianity, still, as she had with curiosity set herself to watch the girl's conduct daily, she had to acknowledge that May seemed to be actuated by an entirely different motive from most of the girls in the class. She was bright and kind to all and thoughtful for every one's comfort.

Little did May know of the close scrutiny to which she was constantly subjected in those days. She loved Claire and admired her daring merriment, often longing to consent to the schemes of 'fun behind the teacher's back,' which Claire was constantly proposing. Great would have been Claire's scorn had May yielded. But as May stuck loyally to her colors, having as her motto for daily life, 'What would Jesus do?' Claire really admired her, realizing that there was some power which kept her from wrong doing. She teased her, however, and called her a 'little saint' and a 'coward' for not joining in the mischief, and once when May had made a great effort and told her that 'it was lovely to be a Christian, Christ gives such peace in the heart,' she had laughed loudly and said that what she (Claire) was after was fun and pleasure, not peace—peace was all right for old folks; fun for the young.

To May it must have seemed a hopeless task to bring that heart into contact with the great heart of Christ. She had said no more on the subject to Claire until the last day of school. As the girls were bidding each other good-bye, Claire had said, 'Well, May, I suppose I sha'n't see you again for a long while, now that school is finished. Are you going to bury yourself in that little country place? I don't believe I could live in any place but the city; there isn't enough fun anywhere else.'

'Mother needs me at home,' returned May, gently. 'May I tell you about my home, Claire? It is close to Lake Memphremagog, a little old red farm-house, and from my window there is a most beautiful view of the hills across the lake. Every evening I sit and look out at all the beauty, and think of Him who made everything so beautiful, and remember all my friends before Him. And, Claire, dear, every night at nine o'clock I will be praying for you that you may come to know Jesus and give your heart to Him.'

Claire had laughed, 'I guess your prayers won't hurt me,' and kissing May good-bye had hastily left the room.

Why should these memories come crowding back on her now? She determined to forget these things once for all. Taking up a magazine, she attempted to read, but the words were blurred before her face, and the ticking of her own little clock on the bureau brought back to her mind the words, 'Every night at nine o'clock.' Pooh! why should she care that a little girl was praying for her? What was the use of praying, anyway, when one could not even be sure that there is a God? But May had been sure. May had said that God answered prayer. Stay—what was that May had said about 'peace?' Claire thought that at that moment she would be willing to give anything she possessed for an hour's peace. Was it Christ that gave peace? But being a Christian would involve too much—giving up dancing, cards, theatre-going, and all such amusements. She felt that she could not give up these things, which seemed to her all of life's pleasure. Yet what pleasure could she get out of them until this burden was taken off her heart and mind? Oh, if she could only stop thinking; if only she could have peace! Peace! 'Christ gives peace.' Yes, but being a Christian meant giving up—and she went over the list again. . . . After all, what was to be gained or lost by following either of these two courses—self-pleasing or self-sacrifice? This way of pleasure, where did it lead to? She shuddered as she thought of the possibilities. She had seen lives wrecked on this rock of pleasure-seeking, and she had enough fairness of judgment to realize that with her sensitive temperament and love of popularity her own destruction might be wrought in the same way; though at present life looked very fair and bright for her.

The other path—being good and doing exactly right, however uninteresting—certainly looked almost unbearably dull, but at least there would be no retribution at the end—and there would be peace, peace now and always. Besides, when she came to think of it, May had seemed happy enough, but then surely May had never loved dancing and such pleasures as Claire did.

'It is no use for me to try,' she murmured, half aloud. 'I could not keep on being good for more than two days, no matter how I tried.'

She put out the light, and, opening the window, stood looking out into the night. The wind was howling dismally in the tree tops. The sleety rain drove against the side of the house and into her face as she stood there.

The sudden draught of cold air seemed to clear her mind, and her thoughts grew quieter. The noisy wind died down and the music of the bells began, 'Peace on earth.' The Christmas chimes brought a message to her heart, and closing the window she knelt down. She had never uttered a prayer in all her eighteen years. She knew not how now, but, kneeling there, she raised her eyes to heaven and said, simply, 'I choose the right.' And the God whose ears are ever open heard—and answered. The room seemed filled with celestial light, and Claire felt the presence of a living Saviour, who spoke to her soul that peace which 'passeth understanding.' . . . . The next morning the trees were covered with ice, the rain had ceased, and the sun coming out bright and clear poured a flood of rainbow glory upon the world. Claire's soul was filled with peace. She opened her window and gazed with happy heart upon the bright scene. She loved those dear old trees; from her earliest childhood she had loved them and had spent many hours gazing at them and picturing to herself the forms those branches might take—they were the background, as it were, of all her day-dreams. It seemed all new to her now. The delicate tracery of the fine branches, the short twigs, with their charming little bud ends; the branches stretching upward like long, thin arms, were all bowed to-day with their weight of rainbow-tinted ice. As she gazed there came again to her lips the hymn which had been ringing in her heart ever since she had felt the presence of her Saviour. She had often heard May singing it, and had not understood it. . . . She knew what it meant now.

'My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the pleasures of sin I resign.
My gracious Redeemer, my Saviour art Thou,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, 'tis now!'

Hearing a crackling sound high up in the trees, she glanced up and saw that the heat of the sun was liberating the branches from their icy fetters. As each casing snapped off the little twigs sprang up blithely, as if glad to be again free. As the weight was lifted from them, the long, thin branches triumphantly raised their points to heaven again. For an hour the ice fell almost continuously, the casings of the upper branches striking the lower as they passed, causing these, too, to break off, until the trees were at last free and joyously waving their bare, brown arms in the wind.

'So have the icy fetters fallen from my heart,' mused Claire; 'after the night of storm, the dawn of peace.'

The Star of Bethlehem.

(By Mrs. Roana C. Way.)

Only the wise men saw the star
Gleam in the eastern heavens afar,
On that first Christmas morn;
Only the wise men sought to find
The blessed Saviour of mankind,
Jesus, the lowly-born.

How joyously the angels sang!
Exultingly the sweet notes rang
That told of 'peace on earth.'
Down thro' the ages it has rung,
The music of the song then sung,
The Te Deum of His birth.

The wise men followed not in vain
The star that shone o'er Judea's plain,
But worshipped at the feet
Of Him who rose to Calvary's height,
Whose glory filled the world with light
Whence earth and heaven meet.

O Calvary! shall we forget
The blood, the thorny coronet,
That one despairing cry?
O Earth! thou hast remembered not!
Humanity, thou hast forgot!
Will nothing bring it nigh?

Remembering might bid hatred cease;
Might spread abroad that holy peace
Which Christ on earth began;
That peace, of which the angels sung,
When Bethlehem's star o'er Judea hung.
And that 'good will to men.'

Shall not the wise, to-day, behold
The star beams, tho' they're centuries old,
And follow after peace?
The peace which only seeks to bless
Mankind in all its wretchedness,
And bids all hatred cease.

—'Union Signal.'

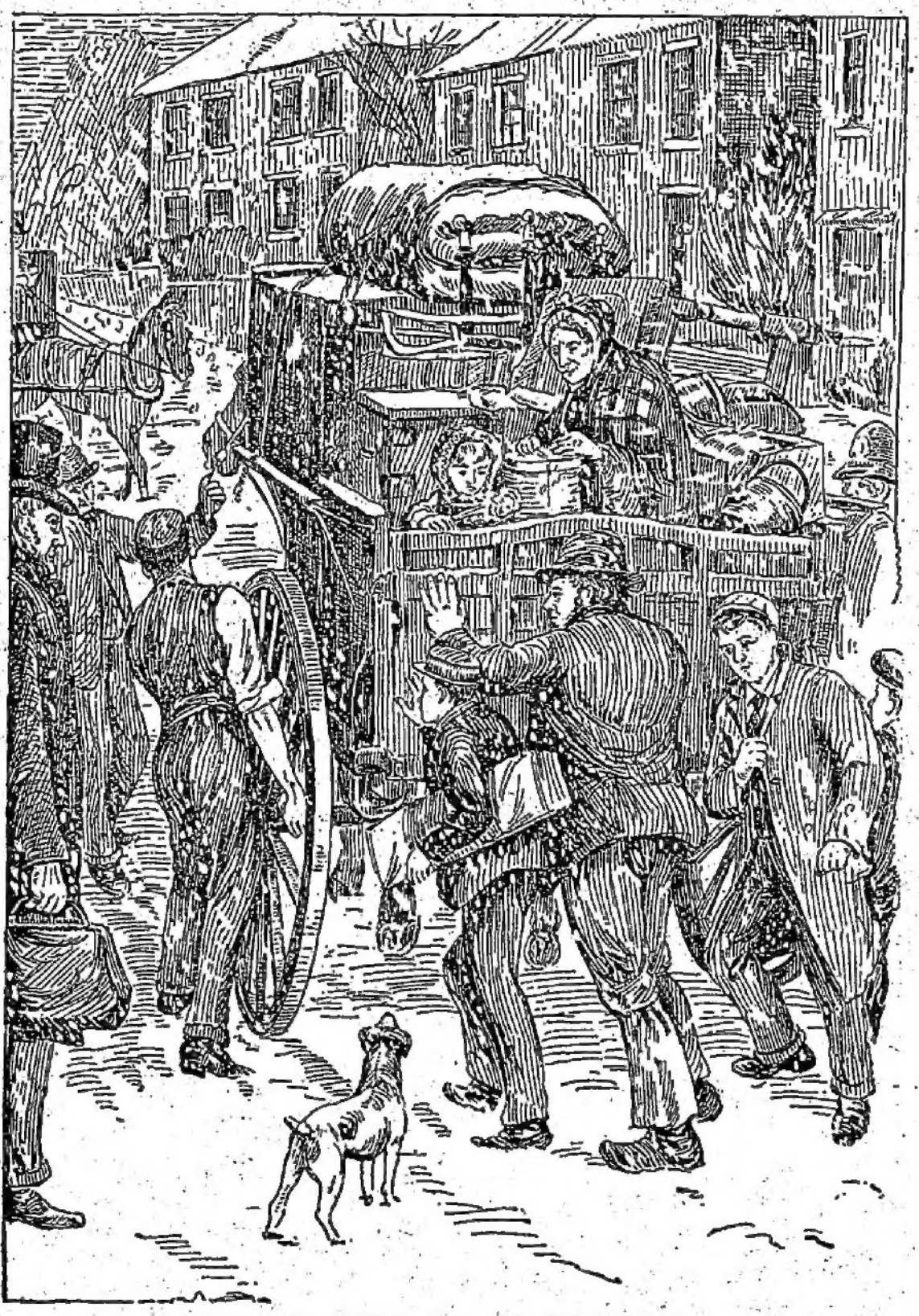
Putting His Shoulder To It.

'It's no go!' said Wilfrid, throwing himself dejectedly into a chair. 'Same old story. Though I got off so early, and walked as fast as I could all the way, they were suited before I got there, and had turned scores away.'

'I'm so sorry, dear,' said his mother, trying to smile bravely, and keep back the rising tears. 'It is hard for the young to bear repeated disappointments. But we mustn't lose hope, Wilfie.'

'Well, I've lost hope of ever getting a situation, mother,' returned Wilfrid, moodily.

'But not hope in God, my boy! and in His care for the widow and the fatherless,' said Mrs. Day, earnestly.



'THE VAN WAS STARTED AND SENT MERRILY ON.'

Wilfrid was silent.

Presently he jumped up. 'I think I'll go round and see if poor old Johnson wants a hand this morning,' he said. 'If I can't do a good turn to myself, perhaps I can for somebody else, and he's sure to be extra busy on Christmas eve.'

Johnson was a lame cobbler who lived round the corner, and Wilfrid often lent his strong legs and willing hands to fetch needed materials or take home finished work.

The snow lay thick upon the ground, and was still falling heavily. Greyminster was a hilly town, and many of the roads were steep. In one of the worst of them a small van had stuck fast. The vehicle was loaded with the household furniture of the poor old woman, who, with her little grandchild, crouched uncomfortably among the boxes at the back. They were quite unsheltered, and, along with their goods, were becoming quite white with the descending flakes.

In vain the driver urged the horse, taking its head with encouraging words. Strive as it would, the poor creature could not move its burden an inch out of the rut in which the wheel had become fixed.

Two or three men and boys were looking on, apparently in idle speculation as to how long the van and its occupants were likely to keep there; but, strange to say, not one of them offered to help until Wilfrid Day came along. To 'do the work that's nearest' was a principle ingrained in his nature from babyhood, and he immediately ran forward and applied his shoulder lustily to the tail-board of the van.

Then others came forward. A carter who was passing got down from the shafts of his tumbrel to push up behind; a man in his shirt sleeves came out from a neighboring shop and grasped a wheel, and a newsboy did what he could with his one disengaged hand. So amongst them the van was started and sent merrily on its way.

A business-like looking gentleman, with a black bag, had witnessed the whole episode as he approached the spot along a side street. As the vehicle moved off, he came towards Wilfrid, scrutinizing his face keenly.

'Weren't you,' he said, 'one of the lads who applied to Davis & Sims in answer to their advertisement for a boy clerk a week or two ago?'

'Yes, sir,' answered Wilfrid, 'I was.'

'Are you still wanting employment?'

'Indeed I am, sir!' and the boy's pulses beat fast with expectation.

'Well, you can come up to town with me now, if you like, and let us see what you can do. The fellow we took is not fond enough of making himself useful to suit us; but from the way you put your shoulder to that cart just now I shouldn't fancy that laziness is one of your faults!'

Mr. Sims smiled down into Wilfrid's bright, open countenance, thinking that he should be sadly disappointed if any very serious failing proved to be hidden behind so good an expression. He wondered he had not noticed the boy more at first.

'I hope not, sir!' said Wilfrid, blushing. 'I shall be only too glad to come to you, and do my very best. But—but, please, I must run home and tell mother first, or she will be anxious about me.'

'Yes, to be sure, that's right! Always consider your mother,' returned Mr. Sims, approvingly. 'Come up by the next train, and here's sixpence to pay your fare.'

* * * * * *

'Wasn't it lucky, mother,' said Wilfrid, when another Christmas eve came round, to find him thoroughly established in the employment of Messrs. Davis & Sims, with a handsome Christmas-box in his pocket, and his master's words of kindly encouragement ringing in his ears—'wasn't it lucky that I stopped to give a shove to that poor old woman's cart just then? or I might never have been where I am.'

'No luck, my son, but the blessing of God,' answered the widow, reverently. 'I believe that the old proverb ought to be, "God sees that those who help others shall be helped themselves."'—Jennie Chappell, in 'Friendly Visitor.'

The Christmas Bell.

(By Clinton Scollard.)

Had I the power
To cast a bell that should from some grand tower,
At the first Christmas hour,
Out-ring,
And fling
A jubilant message wide,
The forged metals should be thus allied;—
No iron Pride,
But soft Humility, and rich-veined Hope
Cleft from a sunny slope;
And there should be
White Charity,
And silvery Love, that knows not Doubt nor Fear,
To make the peal more clear;
And then to firmly fix the fine alloy,
There should be joy!

—'The Independent.'

Christmas Snow.

Soft and slow falls the snow
Over forest, field and town;
Pure and white are the hills to-night
That this morn were bare and brown.

Far and faint the sleigh-bells quaint
Chime and jingle, swing and ring,
And over there in the snowy air
Distant psalmists sweetly sing.

From the church-bells overhead
Now a golden rain is shed,
On the listening hearts below;
'Peace on earth, good-will to men,'
From the winter skies again,
Is falling softly with the snow.

—'Youth's Companion.'

[For the 'Messenger.'

The Day After Christmas.

'I'm tired of Christmas!'

'Oh, Robbie, you mustn't say that.'

'But I am. I've played with all my toys and I've eaten all my candies, and I'm just tired of everything.'

'Oh, but, Robbie, you know you should not talk like that,' said eight-year-old Nan, 'mother would not like it.'

'I wish mother was at home,' wailed baby Ethel.

'Let's go and see if Aunt Winnie is in, she'll 'muse us.'

'Why, children,' exclaimed a cheery voice, as Aunt Winnie herself opened the nursery door. 'What is the matter?'

'Oh, auntie, we were just going to look for you.'

'Yes, we're tired of Christmas.'

'Tired of Christmas, Robbie, already?'

The children led Aunt Winnie to the big armchair, and baby Ethel climbed up in her lap.

'Now, 'muse us, auntie. But don't tell us any more about Santa Claus; please,' said poor little Robbie.

Auntie smiled, and patted Robbie's flushed cheek.

'What is that little red horse-shoe on the floor? Would you hand it to me, please, dearie?'

'Which? The magnet? That was the littlest thing I got in my stocking yesterday. What are you going to do with it, auntie?'

'I want to show you a little experiment. Do you know what the magnet is for?'

'To catch iron with. It just catches the iron and holds it as if it was glued on,' answered Nan, who always noticed things, 'but you can take it off again,' she added, slowly.

'Yes,' said Aunt Winnie, 'Nan, dear, would you like to run to my room and look in my little tool box. There you will find a row of boxes of tacks. I should like you to bring the smallest box of tacks and the largest, and in the corner you will see a little pile of old tacks, bring a few of them. And if you can carry any more, you might bring three or four of the large nails at the right hand.'

'Oh, I'll go with her and carry the nails,' said Robbie, now quite interested. 'What can they be for? Do you think it is to hammer them into something, Nannie?' he asked as they ran along the hall. 'Auntie is always thinking of something nice.'

'Oh! see these beautiful little gold-headed nails. Sha'n't I take some of them, too?' as they opened the tool box.

'Well, Robbie, auntie didn't say so, you can carry these big nails.'

'Oh, but I'll just take these, they're so pretty,' said Robbie.

They ran back to the nursery.

'Here, auntie, here are the tacks. Don't you want a hammer, too?'

'No, darling, we don't need a hammer. Put the tacks on the table, please.'

Nan put the tacks carefully on the table and drew up a chair for Aunt Winnie.

Robbie seized the magnet, 'Will tacks come up on this, auntie? Oh, see, just see them jump for it. Look, Nan, I've caught them all.'

Nan was watching in astonishment. She turned with a puzzled face to her aunt.

'Auntie, why do some of the tacks hang on to each other without touching the magnet?' she asked.

Aunt Winnie smiled, 'Shall I preach you a little sermon, dearies? We will use the magnet for "an illustration," as the ministers say.'

'I'm going to be a minister when I grow up, just like Uncle Robertson in Quebec,' announced little Robbie.

'Me too, be a minister,' said baby Ethel.

'Huh,' said Robbie, 'girls can't be ministers, only men can.'

Ethel was about to wail over the misfortune of not being a man, but auntie kissed her and told her she might be a missionary when she grew up, and that was just as good as being a minister.

Ethel was comforted, and Nan, who paid but little attention to Robbie's aspirations, asked Aunt Winnie to 'do the sermon.'

'Well, let us suppose these tacks are a lot of people. What kind of people would we have here in the pile?'

'Big people and little people,' said Robbie, 'and middling-sized people.'

'And I suppose the crooked, old little tacks would be bad or ugly little people, and the gold-headed ones pretty, or rich. Wouldn't they, auntie?'

'Well, then, we have here a crowd of all sorts of people—'

'Like in Sunday-school,' observed Nan, 'there are all kinds there. Lots of little

children, and not so many big people, and some are rich and some are poor, just like the tacks.'

'Why, Nannie dear, you could almost "do" this sermon yourself.' Nan smiled and blushed.

'But what is the magnet going to do?' asked Robbie, who could never keep still very long.

'Well, now, supposing I hold the magnet down near the tacks, what happens?'

'Just like before,' said Rob, 'they all jump up to it.'

'Do they all jump up to it, Nan?'

'No,' answered Nan, slowly. 'Not all. I think all the little ones do, but scarcely any of the big ones, and only one end of the biggest.'

'Auntie, what has that got to do with preaching?' asked Robbie, curiously. 'When the minister talks he does not tell about magnets. He tells things out of the bible.'

'Auntie,' said the more thoughtful Nan, 'don't you mean it to be—isn't it like—"Suffer the little children to come," because it's the little tacks that seem so glad to jump up on the magnet?'

'Yes, darling, that's just it. The small tacks represent the little children, for in the early years of our life we are more easily drawn to the Lord Jesus. It is much easier for little children to give themselves to Jesus than for those who are older and have formed habits of doing their own way instead of doing the things Jesus would have them do.'

'Oh,' said Robbie, who had been thinking hard, 'Oh, and I know why the big tacks didn't come up so easily. Because they were bigger!'

Aunt Winnie smiled and patted Rob's curly head. 'You mean, that as the larger tacks were heavier and did not come up so easily, so, the older people get, the harder it is for them to give up their own way. And see this big nail. Just its head is lifted up, all the rest clings to the ground. Those who grow up without knowing Christ get so bound about with earthly ties, that it is nearly impossible for them to let go entirely—but nothing is impossible with God.'

'Auntie, why do those tacks hang on to each other—the ones that are not touching the magnet, I mean? I have been trying to make these on the table hold each other up, and they can't.'

'You know there is a power in the magnet, Robbie, and when a piece of iron comes in contact with it, it receives the power too—it is the same kind of power, though there is not so much of it.'

'Auntie, I know what it's like,' said Nan softly—'Isn't it like, you know, when we come close to Jesus, he gives us some of his power and then we can do things for him?'

'Yes, darling, Jesus wants to give to each of his followers the same Holy Spirit which was in him when he lived down here on earth—the same spirit which kept him from yielding to temptation, which kept him obedient and sweet and helpful, when he was a little boy. Jesus will give his Spirit to even the youngest, because he wants us to be good, and we can not keep ourselves good.'

'Somtimes I'm very naughty,' said Nan, 'but I ask Jesus to make me a good little girl again, and he does.'

Aunt Winnie kissed them all, and was gathering up the tacks, but Robbie said, 'Oh, don't take them away, auntie, tell us some more about it.'

'Yes, please, tell us some more,' begged Nan, slipping her arm around auntie's neck.

'Well, it's getting late, but I'll show you this one thing more. See this piece of note-paper. And see, I'll set this one tack alone here in the middle of the table. Now, I hold the magnet over it, but in between I put the paper. The tack can not see the magnet, but what does it do as I move the magnet around over it?'

'Oh, oh, the tack follows it around.'

'Yes, well-you know we can not see Jesus now, something hides him from our sight just as this paper hides the magnet from the tack, but still we can follow in his footsteps though we can not see him who guides us. This is called "walking by faith." Now, I think we must really put these toys away, for tea will be ready soon, and we must be all tidy and ready when mother comes in.'

'And will you show us some more 'lustrations another day?' pleads Robbie.

'Yes, dear, some other day.'

IVY LEAF.

Some One to Love.

Mr. Moody is responsible for the following touching incident: 'During the war a little boy, Frankie Bragg, was placed in one of the hospitals. He said it was hard to be there, away from all those who loved him. The nurse who was attending him bent down and kissed him, and said she loved him. "Do you love me?" he asked. "Kiss me again; that was like my sister's kiss." The nurse kissed him again, and he said, with a smile, "It is not hard for me to die now, when I know that some one loves me." If we had more of this sympathy for the lost and the sorrowing, the world would soon feel our influence.'

Christmas Bells.

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

But in despair I bowed my head—
'There is no peace on earth,' I said;
'For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace an earth, good-will to men.'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!'

Henry W. Longfellow.

Very Presumptuous.

'Well! I never heard such a thing! How very presumptuous!' exclaimed Ida Morton, laying down the book she held in her hand, and looking up at her old friend, Mrs. Montrose, with an expression half of dismay, half of disgust. It was a pretty picture. Ida sat on the flower-flecked grass, her lissome figure and fair, golden-framed face bent down towards the book she had been reading. White doves cooed in echo to the silvery tones of her sweet young voice; bees buzzed in and out of the rose and honeysuckle bushes round her, and in the big garden-chair against which she leaned sat the dearest old lady in the world, owner of the quaint cottage in which Ida Morton was lodging while painting her last commission—a picture of glen and wood, with softly rippling, softly-shaded streamlet of silver beauty. Such a dear old-fashioned woman, in her soft pale, grey dress, lace crossover, and close-fitting cap bordering the silver hair upon her brow. On the lips is a smile of sweetness, in the eyes a look of love, over the face the light of peace—oh, yes! you would have called Mrs. Montrose a beautiful woman, although she was old and wrinkled, and grey-haired—just because you could not help it—it was the truth.

'What do you call presumptuous, my dear?' said Mrs. Montrose, laying her hand gently on the girl's arm.

'Just listen.' And Ida read:

'The late Joseph Mackey, of New York, printer and publisher, was a great Bible-reader and Bible-lover. He determined to have a Bible of his own, and having a large number of workmen in his employ, he made them print for his private and individual use a complete copy of the Holy Scriptures, differing from the ordinary one only in this, that wherever there was a general promise or command he made it particular by inserting his own name before it. For example, he made it run thus:—"God so loved the world that Joseph Mackey believing on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom Joseph Mackey is chief." "My grace is sufficient for Joseph Mackey, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." "Himself bore Joseph Mackey's sins in his own body on the tree."'

Ida stopped suddenly, and exclaimed, 'I think it most presumptuous, don't you?'

'No, my dear,' said the old lady, very gently, but with a joyous gleam in her still, dark eyes, 'I don't think he went beyond his privileges. All that believe in and obey the good Lord are his children, and are entitled to the rich legacy He left them in His will.'

'I quite understand,' said Ida, 'that salvation is a personal matter, but I don't quite like the idea of taking possession of the Bible promises in that way; it would make things so dreadfully real,' pausing a little to select a word, and then using it with lowered breath. 'And it would not always be comfortable; for example, I am not sure I should like this: "If Ida Morton will come after Me, let her deny herself and take up her cross daily." I do not so much mind the comforting bits of the Bible, but I do not like the commands coming so closely into my daily life.'

'You speak very frankly, my child,' said the old lady gravely; 'I can imagine the Scriptures became a different book to Joseph Mackey when he read it in that way. We all like to claim God's promises, even though we can't go the length of printing our names before them like this man did. But when it comes to carrying out his commands, many besides yourself object. It is not presumptuous to assure ourselves boldly of God's word; it is but blessed faith.'

'Well, dear Mrs. Montrose, it certainly would make my hope of heaven and grasp of God very real, if I read my Bible as Joseph Mackey read his, and I am afraid—don't be shocked, I only want to be quite honest—my life would be very different if I read the commands of Christ as literally,' and the girl shut her book impatiently.

'Oh! don't look at me so gravely,' she cried presently. 'I am not good, I know; I'm only a half-hearted Christian. I'd like to be safe and happy, but I'd like to have my own way a bit too; I don't like giving up my will. It is hard, you know, Mrs. Montrose, when one is young, and the world before one.' 'Not hard to a true heart, my child. Our way, our will, can become the Lord's way and will. Believe me, 'tis better so. You are not happy, child, half-hearted as you are, you've not enough of Christ to enjoy Him, and you've just enough to spoil the flavor of all worldly ways and pleasures.' 'No! I'm not happy!' sighed the girl. 'What shall I do? How shall I become whole-hearted? I long to be,' she concluded piteously, the tears beginning to flow. 'Begin afresh, dearie. Give yourself right away to Christ and believe He has taken you; then trust Him to take the "don't want to" out of your heart. Let Him show you Himself. Ask Him to. The sight of his face in its love and beauty will blot out all others. His commandments are not grievous—it is your misreading of them makes them seem so. I think you must ask Him to teach you, for no one else can, dearie.' There was silence for a moment. Then Ida looked up, tears glittering on her long, black lashes.

'I'm ashamed of myself,' she cried; 'I have never been real. Mrs. Montrose, will you help me to learn Christ? He has taught you, ask Him to teach me!' In the very words lurked a prayer which the Good Shepherd heard. For deeper than the longing in Ida's, was the longing in the heart of Jesus to safe fold and lead the wilful, wayward heart of the weeping girl. Dear young reader, do you stand where Ida stood, wanting to grasp the promises without fulfilling the conditions? Is your Christian life unsatisfactory? Suppose you try what claiming the promises and carrying out the commands of Christ will do for you. Put a little presumption into your Bible-reading, and see if you do not realize the promised blessing.—Eva Travers Evered Poole, in 'The Christian.'

Could Not Answer No.

Once there lived a bright-eyed boy,
His father's pride, his mother's joy;
His limbs were strong, his face was fair,
And beautiful his dark brown hair,
And, pure in heart and full of glee,
A favorite with all boys was he,
First in his lessons, and the same
In every exercise and game;
And yet this lad, with heart like snow,
Sank to black depths of sin and woe,
Because he could not answer 'No.'

Some of his chums ran off to play
Instead of church one Sabbath day;
'Come with us, Jack!' to him they cried,
'In apron-strings you are not tied;
You'll come with us and have some fun,
And we'll be back ere set of sun.
Come, Jack, your father will not know
Don't be a muff!' and Jack, although
To Sunday-school his steps were bent,
Yet turned aside, and with them went;
And did a thing he knew was 'low,'
Because he could not answer 'No.'

Once turned from virtue's narrow way,
In evil paths Jack learned to stray,
And getting used to frequent blame,
Lost bit by bit the sense of shame.
He learned to pilfer and to steal,
And lied, his misdeeds to conceal,
Till, lost to honor and to truth,
He spent an idle, vicious youth;
And yet he could not fail to know
That what had brought him down so low
Was that he could not answer 'No.'

The company he kept grew worse,
He learned to bet and back a horse;
They tempted him to drink and smoke;
He took the pledge, his pledge he broke.
His money went, his friends grew few,
He lost his situation too,
Until poor Jack found to his cost,
That, health and reputation lost,
Men shunned him as a common foe;
Yet—bitterest drop in all his woe—
He knew that he had fallen so low
Because he could not answer 'No.'

—Alex. Small, in 'Band of Hope Review.'

Forever Free.

Holy Spirit, truth divine,
Dawn upon this soul of mine;
Word of God, and inward Light!
Wake my spirit, clear my sight.

Holy Spirit, love divine!
Glow within this heart of mine;
Kindle every high desire;
Perish self in Thy pure fire!

Holy Spirit, power divine!
Fill and nerve this will of mine;
By Thee may I strongly live,
Bravely bear, and nobly strive.

Holy Spirit, right divine!
King within my conscience reign;
Be my law, and I shall be
Firmly bound, forever free.

Samuel Longfellow.

The 'Medical Journal' says that the paper used in many brands of cigarettes made in England contains arsenic. When arsenic is inhaled in small quantities it causes a chronic cough and other symptoms usually associated with consumption.

Little Folks.

Christmas With Two Mollies.

Mollie Brown speaks.

What did I have for Christmas?
Oh, some bonbonnieres and a doll,
A watch, an upright piano, and a point-lace parasol!
But I wanted a grand piano—I don't like the tone of this,
And I wanted a diamond necklace —wouldn't that have been bliss!
The bonbons are every one creamy —they know I don't like that kind,
And the doll isn't anything extra— they said 'twas the best they could find.
Oh, Christmas is always horrid!— I never get what I expect,
And then I must wait a year longer, and again have my hopes all wrecked!

Mollie Smith speaks.

What did I have for Christmas?
Oh, a jew's-harp!—isn't it sweet?
And this beautiful new china dolly, with dress and apron complete!
And I had two sticks of candy, lemon and peppermint,
And a splendid long lead-pencil, and a pretty new dress of print!
Oh, Christmas is always lovely!— I never expect a thing,
And then I get presents and presents, till I feel as rich as a king!
—'Youth's Companion.'

A Christmas Disappointment.

The Little House.

It was only two days before Christmas. Fred Brown and Johnny Williams were talking it over, as boys always do. They were not rich boys with warm clothes and overshoes. Fred's shoes were ragged and Johnny's jacket needed many patches.

'Wish I had some skates,' said Fred. Then he looked at his shoes and added, 'and oh, so many things I would like, but mother said she could not get much for us this year.'

'My mother went to heaven last summer,' said Johnny, 'so I do not think I will get anything for Christmas, unless my teacher gives me something.'

'My mother told me last night that the new family that lived at the foot of the hill was very poor. The father is dead and the mother is sick, and there are three little children. Mother says they will have no wood by Christmas day, and Charlie, the little boy, said he never had a whole apple before when mother gave him one yesterday.'

'Oh, isn't it too bad!' said Johnny. 'Now, if we were not so poor we could do something for them. Wouldn't it be jolly if we could make them happy?'

'But what can two little boys do that won't have anything themselves?'

'If I get an apple I will give it to that little boy Charlie.'

'Oh, yes,' said Fred. 'I know what we can do. Let us tell all the boys at school to-morrow.'

So the next day the boys in twos and threes and larger groups seemed to be very much interested in talking about something. And the night before Christmas boys came from all directions, and all went down the hill towards the little house. Each with his pockets looking as though they held something. Every boy carried one, some two sticks of wood.

And on Christmas day the little house at the foot of the hill contained a bushel of apples and wood enough to last several days.

And little jackets contained more happy boyish hearts than for many days. They had set music to the words, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'—'Bright Jewels.'

Harry's Christmas Tree.

Harry Lenox had a bright, new silver dollar his Uncle John had given him on his eighth birthday.

'Now,' said Harry, 'I will get that sled down at Dick's,' and off he posted to invest his money. It was a few days before Christmas, and the shops were so full of toys that he could not decide what to get. While his attention was divided between the sled and a steam-engine, he saw his little sister Josie stop at the window.

'I wish I had a doll for Mamie,' she said to the little girl by her side.

'Can't your mamma get her one?'

'No; don't you know that there are six of us besides mamma, and not one of us can earn anything?'

Josie went on, but Harry's peace of mind was gone. He was all the boy in the family, and it did seem mean to use all that dollar for himself.

'Will you take the sled, my boy?' asked the shopman.

'Yes—no; I guess I'll take the doll instead,' stammered Harry. 'It is for my little sister.'

'All right!' was the man's reply.

'How much are the Christmas trees?' asked Harry in a low voice.

'See here, my little man, you stay with me to-day, and make yourself useful, and I will give you that little tree.'

Harry was well pleased with the

offer, and that night he spent a happy hour fixing his tree for to-morrow's surprise. Besides the doll for poor sick Mamie, there was a little keepsake for each of the younger children. Mamma's present was a nice warm pair of gloves. Of course they were cheap ones, but they were much better than her old ones, and coming from her little boy they were highly prized.—'The Sunbeam.'

Christmas Eve.

Three happy children were looking out of the window. Within the room it was warm and bright, but outside the streets were filled with snow. Night was drawing near, and the people that walked rapidly through the streets drew up their coats and wraps, for it was very cold. Baby was fretful, and mamma brought him to the window too.

'See, mamma, that little boy selling his papers,' said May, 'how cold he looks.'

'And he's crying,' said Kittie.

'And it's Christmas Eve,' said mamma.

'Oh, mamma! Let me go down and buy his papers so he can go home,' said May.

'I'll buy some with my Christmas dollars,' said Johnnie, who had spoken before.

Mamma was quite willing, and she sent her maid to call the boy to the door.

The children took their money and went down stairs. The shivering boy, with the tears almost frozen on his cheeks, was glad to get into the nice warm hall. The children bought all his papers, and cook gave him a plate of hot soup, and mamma found out where he lived; and what a nice Christmas basket she sent there!

'What's all this?' said papa, coming in just as they were gathering up the papers.

'Why, it's Christmas Eve,' said Johnnie.

'And we've bought his papers,' said May, 'with our Christmas money, so he could go home.'

There was a special tenderness in papa's kiss that night. He felt that his little ones were beginning to understand the meaning of the Christmas festival.—'Bright Jewels.'

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for thee.
—Luther.

Diligence the Road to Success.

By Mildred L. Betteys.

"Oh, dear me," said Bessie, running into her mother's room and throwing down her book and slate. 'Everything is just horrid, mamma; I can not get my problems right; and examination comes next week, and I have not studied for it at all, and you know we are offered a prize for the best spoken piece at the exercises, and I haven't got my piece picked out yet."

'A sorry state of affairs,' thought her mother, but she said, "How does it come, Bessie, that you have left all this work till the last week?"

Bessie did not answer, but sat down with a troubled expression on her face.

Her mother noticing this, said: "Why not let the piece go, and give all your study to your lessons?'

'Why, mamma,' said Bessie, 'would you have me disappoint Miss Grant when she expects me to try for the prize?'

Her real reason was that she loved the admiration and envy of her schoolmates, for Bessie was a vain little girl. Bessie's mother understood this, and only said: 'Very well, I think I can stand the failure if my little daughter can.'

'But, mamma, I want to pass and win the prize, too.'

So she sat down and tried to begin to work in earnest, and this was the picture her mother saw a little later: A little girl with a sorrowful face, with slate and book before her.

'Bessie,' said her mother, 'do you think you have done right to neglect your study for play? Have you not as good a chance as other little girls, and better than some? You are not happy because you do not make the best of your chances.'

'But, mamma, I do not think I am as lucky as some of the other girls. Lily Bell lives in a great stone house, and is a great deal better off than I am.'

'My little girl, when you are older and see more of the world's misery, you will be content with your own home and chances,' was her mother's reply.

Bessie took courage, and after trying again and again, she conquered the lesson which had seemed so hard.

That afternoon she came running into the house, exclaiming, 'Mamma, Mr. Bell was drunk this afternoon, and scared Clara and me, and when we went by his house Lily was crying. Oh, it was awful.'

'And so you have seen some of the misery of the world,' said her mother.

'Yes, mamma, and I won't ever complain any more,' said Bessie.

And she truly did try to conquer both her lessons and love of play. But she did not win the prize. A poor girl who began in time and worked hard for it, won it. And so Bessie saw that the faithful are always rewarded, and she has taken for her motto: 'Diligence is the road to success.—'Union Signal.'

Modest and True.

Willie was a child who really loved Jesus and tried to do what was right to please him. One day a lady met him in the street as he was coming from school. He had a copy book in his hand.

The lady said: 'Will you let me look at your book, Willie?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'How very neat it is—not a blot!' the lady said, as she turned over the leaves.

'O!' Willie meekly remarked, 'my governess scratched out all the blots.'

He did not wish the lady to think better of him than he deserved. It would have been easier for him to have remained silent, and then the lady would have thought his book never had any blots. But then it would have been false; that would have been a great blot on his heart.—'Sunday Hour.'

When some people say they are willing to do anything for Christ, they mean anything that can be done without sacrifice or effort.'

The Right Road.

'I have lost the road to happiness—
  Does any one know it, pray?
I was dwelling there when the morn was fair,
  But somehow I wandered away.

'I saw rare treasures in scenes of pleasures,
  And ran to pursue them, when, lo!
I had lost the path to happiness,
  And I knew not whither to go.

'I have lost the way to happiness—
  Oh, who will lead me back?'
Turn off from the highway of selfishness
  To the right—up duty's track!

Keep straight along, and you can't go wrong,
  For as sure as you live, I say,
The fair, lost fields of happiness
  Can only be found that way.
—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in 'Good Cheer.'

The Children of Inebriates.

A specialist, who gives the results of particular studies concerning the children of inebriates, in 'The Quarterly Journal of Inebriety,' shows how society, by tolerating the saloon curse, imposes upon itself the evils of double taxation. It shoulders all of the burdens which immediately result from the saloons, and then taxes itself again to take care of the unfortunate children born of inebriate parents. A good many of such children die early, or the tax would become intolerable. Basing his investigations on the study of twelve families of inebriates and twelve families of temperate people, he reaches the following results:

	Drinkers.	Temperate.
Number of children	57	61
Deaths under one week old .. .	25	6
Idiots	5	0
Dwarfs (stunted in growth) ..	5	0
Epileptics	5	0
Chorea, ending in idiocy	1	0
Deformed and diseased	5	0
Hereditary drunkards	2	0

I Know a Thing or Two.

'My dear boy,' said a father to his only son, 'you are in bad company. The lads with whom you associate indulge in bad habits. They drink, smoke, swear, and I am afraid they gamble. They are not safe company for you. I beg you to quit their society.'

'You needn't be afraid for me, father,' replied the boy, laughingly; 'I guess I know a thing or two. I know how far to go and when to stop.'

The lad left his father's house twirling his cane in his fingers and laughing at the 'old man's notions.'

A few years later, and that lad, grown to manhood, stood at the bar of a court, before a jury which had just brought in a verdict of guilty against him for some crime in which he had been concerned.

Before he was sentenced he addressed the court and said, among other things: 'My downward course began in disobedience to my parents. I thought I knew as much as my father did, and I spurned his advice; but as soon as I turned my back upon my home, temptations came upon me like a drove of hyenas and hurried me into ruin.'—'Temperance Record.'

Canada's Drink Bill.

'The liquor bill for the Dominion,' says the Rev. W. A. MacKay, D.D., 'while smaller than that of either Great Britain or the United States, is large enough to cause anxiety in the minds of all who have the material or moral prosperity of our country at heart. The report of the "Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic" gives the yearly cost of liquors to consumers as $39,879,854. And the report adds, "As more than one-half of this is paid for spirits, to which it is well understood a large addition of water is made before they are vended to the public, the total amount paid is probably considerably in excess of the sum just mentioned." The amount is at least $40,000,000, or $8 per capita of the population, while the direct and indirect loss reaches to about $140,000,000. Very few people realize the magnitude of this awful waste.'

Tobacco Insomnia.

Many brain-workers suffer from inability to sleep. This is frequently met with among those who work late at night. The sufferers complain that they feel most lively just when the time for retiring has come, and that a long period of restlessness precedes a troubled slumber, from which the slightest noise awakens them. This is very often caused almost entirely by an over-indulgence in tobacco. They smoke just before going to bed, ignorant of the fact that not only may tobacco prevent sleep temporarily, but may render it less deep, and consequently less refreshing. A grave responsibility attaches to those who lightly seek to relieve a symptom which is really a warning by recourse to a dangerous palliative. The inability to sleep is often merely the outcome of an unnatural mode of life, and if this be corrected the disability disappears of itself.—New York 'Ledger.'

A Teetotal Village.

Some interesting facts have recently been published respecting the teetotal colliery village of Roe Green, in Lancashire. Five-and twenty years ago the houses of the village belonged almost exclusively to the Bridgewater trustees, who employ most of the men. To-day, out of 140 houses, eighty-one are inhabited by their owners. The Rechabite Tent has a membership of 270, the Band of Hope 286. There is a co-operative store, the property of the village, yielding a profit of three shillings in the pound. The chapel and Sunday-school have been built by the workmen themselves at a cost of £2,700, and in Roe Green there is not a single person over sixty years of age receiving pauper relief. Clearly there is something to be said for a teetotal village.

A Word to Mourners.

I want to ask you that have loved ones who have passed on where the evergreens never fade if you will not enter into this joy at this Christmas time, and so enter in that all traces of sorrow shall leave your faces. Think what Christmas must be there! Think of their talking with the very angels who sang over the plains of Bethlehem! Think of their joy in anticipating our arrival; and you know we may see them before another Christmas comes round, and then all our opportunities for making earth gladder will have gone. Do you ever think of those who have sorrows that your sorrow would be a perfect joy to them? So many have their dead always in sight—dead to honor, dead to all nobility. Think of the wife who has to hear the staggering step of a drunken husband! And she remembers the time when he was so different—when the step was firm and elastic, when the eye was clear and the voice was music. Think you that young wife would not be glad if she could know, as you, that her loved one was in Paradise, and had left an unstained name behind him? Oh, there are things so much worse than what we wrongly call death, that I call on you this Christmas time, out of whose houses dear ones have passed to the Father's house, to twine the Christmas greens and rejoice in all that Christmas means.—Margaret Bottome, in 'Ladies' Home Journal.'

Tobacco as a Germ-Killer.

'Smoking kills germs,' says the 'Champion,' a liquor organ. The proof it gives is that in the great laboratories where germs are cultivated for scientific experiments, all smoking is forbidden. But the 'Union Signal' reminds them there are germs and germs—bad germs that destroy our bodies and good germs that build them up. And the trouble with tobacco is that it does not know the difference between them, but kills off both alike. It is as though the batteries of a certain army should train their guns on their own infantry as well as on the enemy. If you want bad germs killed use water, and fresh air, and sunshine, and they will not cost you half of what tobacco will, either.

Fighting Members.

The 'Fighting Members' of our churches is what Christian Endeavorers were styled by Mr. J. R. Dougall,' of the 'Witness,' in his address before the Dominion Christian Endeavor convention in Ottawa. When he expressed the hope that Endeavorers were all Prohibitionists the cheer that followed left no doubt in the mind of any one present that he had stated the case exactly. In the coming Dominion plebiscite let the Endeavor contingent be well to the fore.

As Old as Order Itself.

'Prohibition,' says the Hon. John A. Levering, prohibition candidate in the coming presidential election in the United States, 'as a principle, is as old as order itself; it is the difference between savagery and civilization. As a people rise from a state of lawlessness to one of law and order, the right of personal liberty is subordinated to that of the public good.

Of six hundred and eleven paupers in the Edinburgh poorhouse, not one was an abstainer, and four hundred and seven admitted that their poverty was due entirely to intemperance.

There are in the United States 240,000 licensed liquor saloons. If formed into a street with saloons on each side, allowing twenty feet to each saloon, they would make a street 265 miles long.

It is stated upon good authority that the working men of Great Britain and Ireland earn six hundred million pounds a year, sixty percent, of which goes for drink. If this is indeed true, Archdeacon Farrar speaks to the point when he says: 'Every nation has its own national devil, and the devil of England is intemperance.'

SABBATH SCHOOL.

LESSON I.—Jan. 3, 1897.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

Acts 1. 1-14.

GOLDEN TEXT.

While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.—Luke xxiv., 51.

(Commit to Memory vs. 7-9.)

Our studies this year are taken from the Book of Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, or, as it has been called, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, working through the apostles. This book was written by Luke, 'the beloved physician,' who also wrote the gospel bearing his name. He was probably a Greek, well educated in literature as well as medicine. He was for many years the companion and fellow-worker with Paul, and wrote this history about 63 A.D., at the end of Paul's first imprisonment. The story extends over about thirty years, or one generation.

This book has been called 'The Gospel of the Holy Ghost,' as it tells of His coming to men and His acts through them. He is mentioned by name fifty times, more often than in all the gospels.

It has been called a 'book of victories,' a 'book of missionary activity.' 'It gives the practice, the exemplification in actual life of the teachings of Jesus.'

LESSON STORY.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, He showed Himself to His disciples many times to prove that He was their living Saviour, and as He was with them He told them that they should not go away from Jerusalem until they had received the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, whom He had promised them in His Father's name (John xiv., 26). The disciples did not understand this promise, but thought Jesus would now set up His kingdom on earth. Jesus explained that He could not tell them when that time would come; only His Father knew that, but that they should receive power when the Holy Ghost came upon them, and that they should be His witnesses at home and abroad.

When He had finished speaking, while they were watching, He began to ascend, and presently the clouds hid Him and they saw Him no more. And while they stood looking up, two angels stood by them asking why they were looking up, and giving them the glorious promise of His coming again.

Then the disciples went back to Jerusalem and to 'an uppper room,' where the eleven apostles and the women who loved Jesus, and about a hundred other disciples waited in prayer for about ten days.

LESSON HINTS.

Luke had written to Theophilus before this, telling him in the gospel of all the things Jesus began to do and to teach. Luke wrote the longest gospel, but he could not tell all the things Jesus had done, because John said 'that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written' if everything that Jesus did could be written down.

A wise man has said that the Gospel was about the things Jesus 'began' to do and teach, and the Book of Acts is about what he continued to do and teach by His Spirit, which He gave to men.

He, 'through the Holy Ghost,' had given commandments; all His words and actions were through the Holy Spirit, and He would have all His followers act and speak in this spirit of holiness which characterizes all His words and deeds.

'The apostles whom He had chosen.' Christ has chosen each one of us to be His follower; nay, more than choosing, He has purchased us with His precious blood. Let us not defraud Him of His rights by holding back the lives which belong to Him.

When Jesus died and was buried, the disciples felt as though all was ended for them; all hope of the coming kingdom seemed to leave them, the future was a blank. But as they were sorrowfully wondering, there came the news, 'He is risen,' 'the Lord is risen indeed'; some believed, some doubted, until they had seen Him with their own eyes, and after that He showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, as Peter says, 'not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead' (Acts x., 41).

He went in and out among His disciples for forty days, 'speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.' And as He was with them He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. 'Wait for the promise of the Father,' he said, and His disciples seem to have thought He referred to the setting up of the temporal kingdom which was ever before their minds. They therefore returned to ask, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?'

Jesus was still patient with their misunderstanding and explained to them that they could not know 'the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power,' he had told them before that, "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only' (Matt. xxiv., 36). But He explained to them that that which they were to receive was 'the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them' (marg). And when they had received the Holy Ghost with all His power they were to bear witness to the power of the living Saviour, not only in Jerusalem, the city they were in, and Judea, the country round about, but in Samaria, an alien country, and 'unto the uttermost part of the earth.'

Matthew adds the great commission which our Lord gave at this time. 'Go ye therefore and make Christians of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (marg.), Matt. xxviii., 19, 20.

'And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven' (Luke xxiv., 51). And as they stood in astonishment, gazing up, wondering if He would come down again, yet beginning dimly to comprehend that this was what He had meant when He told them, 'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to My God and your God,' two angels stood beside them. They asked why they stood 'gazing up into heaven,' as if to remind them that they had other duties now. They stated that 'this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven shall also come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.'

When the angels had spoken, the disciples went back from Olivet to Jerusalem, and into an upper room, probably the same in which they had partaken of that last supper with their Lord, and in which they had met many times since. Here the eleven disciples came every day to pray and wait, and with them came the women who had followed Jesus, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, who is here mentioned for the last time. Christ's brothers were there, and a number of others, numbering altogether about one hundred and twenty persons.

For ten days they waited in prayer before God. There are times in the life of each one of us when we can do nothing but wait; we have to wait, and learning to wait patiently and expectantly is one of life's greatest lessons.

The 'Westminster Teacher' remarks very sensibly upon Christmas gifts as follows:—

'The Christmas days are always to be prepared for, and it is no small task to make all the necessary preparations. The mere matter of personal gifts has grown to be in many cases almost a perplexing one. No one must be omitted, and the right thing must be gotten for each person. The perplexity is sometimes so great as to take away very largely from the pleasure of giving gifts. In too many instances, it must be confessed, there is but little love in the giving. People send presents to those who sent last year to them, or who probably will send this year. Too often the list of those to whom something must be sent grows so long as to be really burdensome. We ought to be courageous enough to do only what is right in all this matter of Christmas giving. The gift that is not sanctified by love ought never to be sent; it will neither carry nor leave a blessing; it will bless neither him who gives nor him who gets. We ought not to send presents which we really cannot afford to give. Some little token given with love, though costing but a few cents, will carry more pleasure than any more formal and perfunctory gift, though it cost a hundred times as much. Books in many cases make the best gifts, because they may be kept and used for years, and may give much real pleasure and profit. Something made with one's own hands is often the fittest token, because when made on purpose for the recipient loving thoughts are wrought into it, making it very sacred. Children should be taught to think of others and make them presents, instead of only expecting to receive of others. We ought to get all we can of the Christ spirit into all our Christmas observance. Too often Christ is left out of Christmas, and gay Christless festivity is the only observance of the day. But this is sacrilegious. We should remember *Christ's* birthday in a way fitted to its sacred meaning.'

The 'Sunday-School World' says:—'When the sweets are eaten, the toys broken, and the Christmas tree gone into the fire, what will be left of Christmas? People go through that experience year after year, and wonder if something more permanent cannot be accomplished by Christmas presents. Certainly. There is that Bible which was given to Johnnie two year ago. He enjoys it yet. Mary received a Schaff's 'Bible Dictionary,' and Charles a Bissell's 'Biblical Antiquities.' They have been helps in Bible reading and Sunday-school preparation, and will be useful for many years to come. "Would you then keep away all candy, toys, and give the children dull, though useful, books?" asks some one. Not at all, dear friend. Doubtless candy and toys have their place; but don't you see that their place is soon empty? Fill in with substantials. Have something to show for your Christmas money.'

My Man John.'

'Will ye gang to meetin' the night, sir-r?'

It was my man, John, who stood in the doorway, tall, broad, and brawny, with a rich brogue of his Scotch voice with its burry r's, but trusty and faithful as ever man could be to earthly master. It was a mile from our suburban home to the place of worship, and it was beginning to snow. John knew I would not be likely to walk, as on pleasant evenings I often preferred doing.

'Yes,' I replied, 'you may get out the carriage, as no one else will go of the family.'

Of course John expected to drive me over; the spirited horse needed attenion, and I felt no compunction whatever about having John outside; he had cronies at the great livery stable just across the way from the chapel. It would be impossible to tell why it was, but on alighting from the carriage that night there was a decided impression on my mind that John wanted to say something to me, yet did not say it.

Well, we had a beautiful meeting! Dr. Willard, our pastor, read passages of Scripture bearing upon our personal obligation in the manner of bringing others to Christ; and the tone being given, all who spoke followed in the same line of remark, and all seemed very much in earnest. I remember being so warmed up by the spirited conference which followed the pastor's appeal that I arose and stated feelingly and honestly my fixed purpose to do all in my power to bring some souls to a knowledge of Christ, and the effort should be made without delay.

And so engrossed was I with my reflections and resolves that it escaped my particular notice at the time John was holding the horse close by the chapel door as I emerged; nor did it occur to me in any other light than a most commonplace remark, when John observed in his usual respectful tone: 'There were likely many at the place the night, sir-r, with the storm and a'!'

'Yes, quite a good many out, John.'

Then I fell to musing deeply and wondering also; for good and true as my intentions had been in speaking as I had, yet now the pertinacious inquiry kept forcing itself, 'With whom will you begin this blessed work?' and the inquiry puzzled me. There was Mr. Hubert Holyoke, my next door neighbor, evidently rather a godless man; his Sundays were spent in riding or boating, or some other sport; but he would

be a difficult case to begin with. Then there was Mr. Simeon Styles, my opposite neighbor, but here my reflections were broken in upon by John, who said briefly: 'It's a bonny fine voice has the parson, sir-r.'

'Yes, a very fine voice, indeed, John;' yet it never occurred to me that my man must have been listening quite recently to the ministerial tones, thus to comment upon them! Well, where was I? Oh, Mr. Styles—he attended church once in a while, and although affable to a delightful degree as a neighbor, still he was a proud man, and belonged to a very aristocratic old family; and was there not danger of his resenting what he might consider as a meddlesome piece of impertinence on my part? On the train every day I saw Colonel Parsons, an entertaining gentleman of no very fixed principles, if report said true; we were very good friends, but undoubtedly he would ridicule any advances on the subject of his soul's salvation. It almost annoyed me when John's deep, honest voice intruded itself for another brief observation: 'I suppose, sir, the kirk is open to a' alike when needfu'.'

Flitting memories of the fact that my wife had imagined of late that John was much interested in Kittie Malcolm, waitress at Mr. Styles's house, floated through my mind as I thought, half regretfully, 'I suppose the man wants to marry Kittie some day;' so I replied somewhat shortly, 'Yes, John, I presume any one can have the use of the church who wishes it.'

Was it my fancy, or did John really sigh heavily as he drew in the reins and soothed Mattie, the mare, who seemed inclined to shy and stumble in an unwonted manner, as she trotted briskly through the snow?

'I guess Mattie must be sharp-shod tomorrow, John,' I said, coming somewhat out of my reverie.

'Aye, aye, sir-r; it's gude care ye gie the horse, no fear-r!'

Was there really a tinge of bitterness in the voice of my always respectful John? Oh, no! it was simply my imagination. There was never anything but hearty good will in John's voice and John's answer. Only a little bridge to cross, and we should be at home; then I would tell wife all about the meeting, and ask her help in selecting some suitable object on whom to begin my Christian endeavors. Only a little bridge!—but how should I know that Mattie would suddenly plunge and rear, tossing us both like snowballs against the hard railing!

But she had not been sharp-shod in season, and the laborious effort at keeping her springing trot without slipping had fretted her in the first place, and the sudden upstarting of a man on the bridge had frightened the nervous creature beyond control; and the next moment she dashed home without either master or man, for both were prostrate on the bridge.

But John was only stunned, it appeared, for in a few moments he was carrying me in his strong arms to my house and my own room. The doctor was called, and my injuries proving only slight, in a few days I felt able to go out again. But wife acted strangely—evidently had something on her mind she dreaded to tell, but to my repeated request, 'Please send for John,' she at length said tearfully: 'Poor John! for once he could not come, sent we ever so urgently; he fainted away the other night just outside your chamber-door, and is now lying at the point of death.' The doctor said you were hardly able to go out yet, so cautioned me against telling you; but oh! my dear,' she added, 'he so wanted to see the minister last night when he became conscious, that some one went for him in the night; and he told of having stood in the chapel that night of the meeting, and how on the way home he wanted you dreadfully to "say a gude word for his puir soul," as he expressed it; and Dr. Willard thinks he is a Christian, and fully prepared to die.'

But I waited to hear no more, as dashing from the room, regardless of needed caution, I sped with wondrous strides to the side street where John lay in his lowly bed. Ah! God be pitiful! I saw it all now. The man who sat by my side that night was longing for the pearls I was thinking of casting, as it were, before swine. My golden opportunity was close at hand, and I, too blind to see, too deaf to hear, had even been more solicitous concerning the needs of my fine horse than for the needs of this man's immortal soul.

But I was at his bedside. There he lay—his head thrown back on the pillow, his lips pallid, and the eyes closed. 'Dead!' I thought, and with a mighty regret too great for endurance I called aloud, 'Oh, John! come back!' As if impossible to hear my voice and not respond with prompt respect, the pale lips murmured feebly, 'Aye—aye—maister-r; an' I'll try, sir-r.'

And he did come back, my faithful John—came back to be the same dear old comfort he had been for ten long years. But I had missed the 'golden opportunity' of claiming him as my first convert, when alas! so easily 'it might have been.' But now I never look around among my neighbors to discover, if possible, who most needs a word in season, and wife never has had to help choose a suitable person on whom to bestow my Christianizing endeavors; I always try the person nearest me, and never find opportunity lacking for constantly exerting a Christian's influence. And zealous and true in his great Master's service, among the most useful and valued members of our pleasant little church, ranks—my man, John.—'Advance.'

The Abuse of Christmas.

(By Helena Huntington.)

Into an elaborate piece of 'drawn work' she was evidently stitching her very life blood—her bloodless fingers flew hurriedly over the work, pausing only occasionally to press the aching head and side.

'Christmas work?' asked a friend.

'Yes,' sighed the weary one. 'Actually, that word that once made my heart bound with joy, has grown hateful to me. The very word "Christmas" strikes a dread to my heart. You would not wonder at it if you knew the amount of work I have planned to do.'

'Why do you so overtax yourself? You have neither time nor strength for it; better buy everything.'

'Buying presents I cannot think of these hard times; that is, presents that would not be an insult to my friends, but I thought by hard work I could make acceptable ones at little expense.'

'Yes,' but it will be another instance of bricks without straw—your life is of more value to your loved ones than such intricate work.'

'Oh, dear! it is not for those I love best I am working so, it is to pay debts of obligation under which I have been placed. I despise this "You-give-me-and-I-give-you" system, yet I have not the courage to break away from it, but I am so tired of it all I wish the holidays could be blotted out, for me!'

As we listened to this conversation we felt as we have many times before, that it was high time that individuals, and the press, saw their responsibility in regard to this abuse of the day that ushered the Christ-child—the good tidings of great joy.'

Into my home there come fifteen of our best-known religious papers. I have recently noted in nearly all of them articles with the trite heading, 'What to make for Christmas.' Thus poor, weary women are constantly reminded to do, do! Oh, for more don'ts along the line. Is not so much gift-giving a desecration of that sacred day? He made the day by giving us Himself. It should be crowned with the gift of ourselves to Him. It should be a time of spiritual exaltation. But alas! perishable gifts so weary, or absorb us, that the heart, like the 'inn,' has no room for Jesus. The gift of gifts is forgotten!—'Michigan Advocate.'

Handsome Christmas Presents.

There is no reason why each reader of the 'Witness' should not obtain one of the Premium Bibles in time to give it to himself or to some one else as a Christmas present. The Bible can be obtained in the following ways:—

The Bible will be sent to every one sending $2.25 for a subscription to the 'Weekly Witness' and the Bible, or to every one sending $4.25 for the 'Daily Witness' and the Bible. This is not the best way. A better way to obtain the Bible is to send four dollars for a club of four subscriptions to the 'Weekly Witness,' or six dollars for a club of two subscriptions to the 'Daily Witness.' In either case the sender gets the Bible free.

Another way is to send six dollars for twenty 'Northern Messengers,' now published weekly, to separate addresses, or twenty dollars for one hundred copies of the 'Messenger' to one address, as in the case of Sunday-schools or Bands of Hope. In either case the sender gets the Bible free.

But perhaps the method which will prove most satisfactory to the subscribers and to the one that secures the subscriptions is that offered by the Midwinter Campaign.

Those sending ten dollars' worth of subscriptions at the advantageous terms of the campaign secure a Bible free as soon as the ten dollars has come in, and then have a prospect for one of the 120 valuable prizes offered in the campaign. The canvasser likes this plan because he finds it easy to get subscriptions to the 'Witness' when he can offer the 'Messenger' free as a premium, and because he has, besides the Premium Bible, which is a certainty, a prospect of obtaining one of the 120 valuable prizes offered in the campaign.

Study out each offer and work on the one that holds out the best prospects.

The Premium Bible is the one that has been described so fully of late in the 'Witness.'

The 'Northern Messenger' is an old paper, but in its new form and character a new paper. It has now twelve pages instead of eight, as before. It is issued every week instead of every other week, and the subscribers get, speaking roundly, three times as much reading matter for the same price.

Northern Messenger.

A number of the Sabbath-schools in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia are introducing the 'Northern Messenger' in its new form in their schools for the coming year. The following are some of the many orders and commendations received daily:—

Messrs. John Dougall & Son,—

Our teachers have decided to take the 'Messenger' for 1897. Please send 250 copies. Will remit for same after the New Year.

THOS. BRINSMEAD,
Secretary East Presbyterian Church Sunday-school.

Toronto, Dec. 7, 1896.

John Dougall & Son,—

Enclosed you will find ten dollars ($10.00), for which you will please send an annual subscription of fifty copies of your 'Northern Messenger' to the following address. We are greatly pleased with the new 'Messenger,' and wish it every success.

Yours truly,
E. F. GLENDINNING,
Eliesmere, Ont.

Secretary Knox Church Sunday-school, Agincourt.

We wish you success in your improved paper, which we find suits our school first-class.

Yours truly,
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